

FIELDING Bobby Davies in the unlikely and unusual position of goalkeeper, Wycombe Wanderers slumped to their fourth Berger Isthmian League defeat of the season on Tuesday when they succumbed to bottom club Staines Town.

Davies is of course normally a full-back. But because of the unavailability of two regular goalkeepers, Davies, who has done the job once before for the Blues, went between the posts. John Maskell was attending a funeral while Peter Spittle injured his back at work.

It was not so much Davies' performance in goal that let Wycombe down, but the

Staines 2, Wycombe Wanderers 1 Report by MICHAEL KNOX

defensive reshuffle that the move caused. Paul Birdseye had to switch flanks, allowing Gary Fowles to make his Isthmian debut for them at right back.

The much changed defence never looked happy against a busy and bustling Staines side, who scored just either side of the interval after Blues had taken the lead midway through the first half.

Yet with a little foresight Wycombe could have been spared those changes. Both manager Andy Williams and his assistant Howard Wells were goalkeepers in their playing days

not too long ago and could have done a reasonable job. But neither had signed the forms necessary to play.

DISAPPOINTING

It was a bitterly disappointing result for Wycombe but of course a thrilling one for the home side whose only league wins of the season have come against the top two clubs of the past ten years — Enfield and now Wycombe.

That joy will be tempered a little by the knowledge that they play on one of the worst pitches in the division. It was hard, bumpy and short of grass and was undoubtedly an advantage to the home side.

That does not excuse Wycombe's lacklustre play es-

pecially in the second half. In last Saturday's match against Dagenham they missed some great goal chances — on Tuesday they created just one opportunity.

With Davies dropping the ball the first time it came his way, Wycombe made an understandably cautious and hesitant start. But soon, despite the conditions underfoot, they settled down to play some good if frantic football.

Their pressure was rewarded in the 24th minute when they took the lead. Steve Long's cross from the left bounced awkwardly in front of goalkeeper Graham Yates, who succeeded only in kneeling straight into the path of Derek Harris. Despite his misses against Dagenham, Harris made no mistake from four yards.

This was a deserved lead for Wycombe but just five minutes before the interval Staines equalised with a well-worked goal. Good play by Peter Beasant on the right, sent away the dangerous Jester Williams. His cross into the middle was headed home by the promising Eugene Bissett.

Williams was undoubtedly the most accomplished player on the field. He has interested several Football League clubs including Swindon, West Ham and Manchester City and it was he who netted what proved to be the winner in the 57th minute.

Wycombe failed properly to clear a corner kick and the ball came out to Williams just outside the penalty area. From there he sent a brilliant shot fractionally inside the left upright. Many better goalkeepers than Davies would have been struggling to save that thunderbolt.

STAINES: G. Yates, F. Ennals, E. Manners, E. Young, K. Fidler, P. Beasant, R. Dennison, A. Rowland (sub T. Soutar 47 mins), B. Steer, J. Williams, E. Bissett.

WYCOMBE: R. Davies, P. Birdseye, G. Fowles, S. Hardwick, A. Phillips, D. Allanson, J. Priestley, M. Hollifield, D. Evans, D. Harris, S. Long (sub T. Scott 72 mins).

Referee: A. W. Ward (New Southgate).

Half-time 1-1. Scorers: Staines — Bissett (40 mins), Williams (57); Wycombe — Harris (24).

Wycombe should have a keeper!

AFTER Tuesday night's debacle, Wycombe Wanderers at least expect to have a goalkeeper tomorrow when they entertain Leatherhead at Loakes Park in a Berger Isthmian League Premier Division game.

John Maskell resumed training last night after a family bereavement and is expected to play. His deputy Peter Spittle is still unfit with a poor back.

Wycombe are naturally keen to bring back striker Stewart Atkins as soon as possible, but although he has started training again, it is unlikely Wycombe will risk

making his injury worse by playing him too soon. Howard Kennedy is another on the mend after a groin injury.

Leatherhead are currently placed fourth in the league having won five of their nine games. In their last meeting, towards the end of last season, the Tanners knocked Wanderers out of the Hitachi Isthmian League Cup.

Meanwhile two other local teams will be making the first step on the long road to Wembley. Chalfont St Peter entertain Banstead in the first round of the F. A. Vase

while Marlow travel to play Kew Association.

BERGER ISTHMIAN LEAGUE PREMIER DIVISION

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Croydon	8	6	0	2	18	7	18
W'thamstow	8	6	0	2	16	8	18
Dulwich	8	5	3	0	9	2	18
Leatherhead	9	5	2	2	16	5	17
Enfield	10	5	2	3	13	10	17
Barking	8	5	1	2	21	13	16
Woking	9	4	4	1	20	13	16
Wycombe	10	5	1	4	16	9	16
Hitchin	9	5	1	3	18	13	14
Slough	9	4	2	3	8	8	14
Dagenham	9	4	1	4	12	12	13
Hayes	9	3	4	2	9	11	13
Hendon	10	3	3	4	12	16	13
Bore'wood	8	3	2	3	10	10	11
Tooting	10	3	2	5	11	17	11
Oxford	7	2	2	3	11	16	8
Staines	9	2	1	6	9	19	7
Kingston	8	1	3	4	7	13	6
Carshalton	9	0	5	4	8	16	5
Sutton	9	1	2	6	7	15	5
Leytonstone	8	1	1	6	4	10	4
Tilbury	8	1	1	6	8	20	4